



FY 2004 QUARTERLY REPORT (1ST QUARTER)

Cooperative Agreement No. 119-A-00-00-00039-00

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

**Submitted to the
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

**By the International Foundation for Election Systems
(IFES)**

October 1 – December 31, 2003

I. GENERAL

Arrival of New Country Director

The new IFES Country Director, Dr. Oskar Lehner, arrived in Tajikistan on November 2. His first days were dedicated to conducting official visits with relevant government authorities as well as meeting with the heads of missions of embassies as well as international organizations and local NGOs. Particular focus was put on expanding IFES' cooperation with other organizations in order to promote synergy and to coordinate activities. With regard to program expansion, fundraising efforts were conducted in order to enlarge the financial base for IFES activities. Possible donors or partners with in-kind contributions include OSCE, UNIFEM, the British and the Japanese embassy, and the Swiss Consulate/SDC.

IFES Representative Completes Lecture Tour

IFES Senior Program Officer Anthony Bowyer conducted a series of lectures on the importance of democracy and open elections in Dushanbe and Tursun-Zade. These lectures were part of a State Department-sponsored Visitor Lecture Series. In the course of three days, Bowyer delivered seven speeches that addressed youth involvement in politics and civil society, increased opportunities for women in political life, the participation of non-partisan observers and balanced election commissions, and freedom of the media.

He began by discussing civil society and volunteerism with 50 students from Tajik State Technological University's Faculty of Economics. Later in the day, he lectured on the importance education plays in building a viable democracy to thirty 10th -11th year students, at the private gymnasium "Tajikistan". At the end of his first day, he met with approximately 20 journalists and media representatives at the Publishing House to discuss the role of public relations and campaign advertising during elections in the United States.

The next day Bowyer spoke with local NGO representatives on lobbying and coalition-building at the Dushanbe Civil Society Support Center. He traveled to Tursun-Zade to meet with students and local NGO activists from IATP to discuss the importance of the Internet as a means of information and communications and praise the opening of a USAID-sponsored Internet center.

In addition, Bowyer delivered a lecture to twenty-five political party representatives at the "Dialogue" Political Discussion Club on the forthcoming elections to the Majlisi Namoyandagon; he stressed the need to educate local citizens about the multiparty nature of Tajik politics and to prepare local branches to conduct concerted political campaigns in the coming year. Finally, on October 22, he addressed a full session of the Majlisi Namoyandagon to lay emphasis on the need for transparency in the elections and the value of having non-partisan domestic election observers and mixed election commissions.

The lecture series resulted in a series of articles on the visit being published in local newspapers. While participating as part of the State Department and U.S. Embassy's Program, the lecture series also allowed Bowyer to discuss in context some of the projects IFES has been engaged in, including its civic education portfolio and political party development activities.

II. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

IFES elaborated and submitted a new work plan for implementing the Cooperative Agreement in FY 2003/4 to USAID.

Civic Education

In mid-December IFES Tajikistan submitted the draft of the new Memorandum of Understanding to the Tajik Ministry of Education (MoE) for signing. It includes governing the further conduct of the civic education textbook project as well as all other IFES school based activities. The document seeks to enshrine the commitment on the part of the Ministry to supporting IFES educational projects over the long term, allowing for sufficient expansion of the project into new regions and schools with full Ministry support. It is expected that additional negotiations over the role of the Ministry will be forthcoming prior to the scheduling of a formal signing ceremony in early 2004.

Civic Education Course and Textbook

IFES undertook several key measures that improved and expanded its civic education course and textbook project this quarter. IFES printed 350 copies of the teachers guide for Part One of the Tajik language version and distributed them during the teachers' training sessions. A total of 2,456 copies of the civic education textbook, Citizenship, Participation & Governance: Your Role in Civil Society in the 21st Century (volume one) in the Tajik language were printed; 1,909 of these copies were distributed to 37 teachers in the approved pilot schools located in the Rasht Valley and Khatlon Oblast. IFES will receive the remaining 6,544 textbooks in several installments by January 15.

Mr. Simon Jenkins and Mr. Kenesh Sainazarov arrived in Dushanbe in order to assist the implementation of the CE textbook project and to conduct teachers' trainings. Both left at the end of December.

IFES conducted five teachers' training sessions, with a total of 77 Tajik-speaking teachers participating. Furthermore, IFES trained 19 Russian-speaking teachers in December. IFES also organized one training session of candidates for the position of a teacher's trainer. IFES selected three trainer candidates out of the training sessions as potential teacher trainers. Training sessions will continue in January 2004 in Soghd Oblast. The six training sessions were supported through funding contributions from OSCE and USAID, with logistical support provided by the Aga Khan Foundation.

The Russian language version of volume two was 90% complete by the end of December. Accuracy and clarity of translation, including meanings of all terms and

concepts, will be double-checked by a control group consisting of ninth grade students. Those classes who have been using volume one of the textbook will introduce part two to their students in February, after a final translation is completed. A total of 15 Russian-speaking schools in the Dushanbe area use volume one and IFES anticipates that 93 schools will be using either the Tajik or Russian version by mid-January 2004.

IFES submitted copies of the textbook to various institutions (OSCE, British Embassy, Swiss Embassy in Tashkent, Aga Khan Development Network, Open Society Institute) in order to introduce the project and to formulate a general request for funding. However, IFES Tajikistan will not pursue these requests until the preparation of an amended second edition concludes in the summer of 2004.

Based on the preparations put in place, IFES predicts that the target figure of the Cooperative Agreement of 120 schools for school year 2003/4 will not only be fulfilled but will be significantly exceeded.

School-Based Activities

Student Action Committees (SAC)

During this quarter, 23 new SACs were created in Dushanbe area, Soghd Oblast, the Areas of Republican Subordination, Khatlon Oblast and GBAO. IFES staff continued its on-site monitoring of the 57 currently-functioning SACs; to date, only one SAC is not running. SAC activities increased and included discussions on “Culture of Citizenship and Citizen’s Behavior” and issues of the family and the state, preparing students newspapers; meetings, cultural activities and celebrations; sports competitions on the eve of “Navruz Day”; planting trees in the school garden and in areas surrounding their communities; attending seminars organized by international and national NGOs; conducting mini-theatres within schools; participating in national and local TV shows and competitions; and organizing Drug Prevention and Civic Education seminars. Students also held fundraising events in order to purchase sports equipment for the schools and to assist veterans and disabled people in the community. SACs strive to improve the well-being of the community and encourage youth to address local issues through mentor-led group interaction and creative problem-solving. Each SAC works and functions as a junior version of a non-governmental organization, gaining valuable experience and appreciation of volunteerism and civil society.

In order to improve the monitoring process, IFES introduced new requirements for the SACs. IFES Tajikistan increased SACs’ reporting obligations and will now provide IFES with quarterly reports on their activities. In addition, IFES will deliver an IFES newsletter to each SAC at least every two months. A total of 40 SACs submitted their quarterly reports to IFES.

IFES and IREX pledged increased cooperation of their respective civic education projects. IFES SAC members and mentors will have access to the six Internet Center and Civil Society Support Centers run by IREX. In addition, soft copies of the civics textbook trainings for Internet and Civil Society Support Centers will be provided. Such

cooperation increases both the sustainability and effectiveness of IFES' own civic education programs.

IFES attended the opening ceremony of the Relief International/Schools Online Internet Center. IFES and Relief International initiated a partnership and worked toward developing a training session for students participating in the Student Action Committees and the Student Local Government Day of three pilot schools located in Soghd Oblast. This joint partnership will expand the students' communications and informational capacities by training them on effective internet usage.

Students Local Government Day (SLGD)

Two trainings for SLGDs took place in Panjikent (Soghd Oblast) and in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). In GBAO, ten students and ten local officials participated while in Panjikent, eight students and eight officials participated. IFES followed up its SLGD training in Khorog by contacting participating schools and students to update IFES on progress achieved since last month's training sessions, the first for IFES in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast. In addition to the training for the programs, a Student Local Government Day project was conducted involving a number of local officials. During the SLGD, students learned about the role, structure and importance of local government. This experience allowed young people to gain access to local governmental officials, ask questions, and to better comprehend functions of their local government with the hope that they will seek greater transparency from their representatives. IFES received instant feedback which was overwhelmingly positive. As IFES is placing greater emphasis on results generated and measuring impact, extensive efforts will be made to follow up on all civic education projects conducted in this remote region of the country.

University Student Conversation Clubs (USCC)

Student Conversation Clubs expanded and are now included in the following universities: Tajik National University, Tajik Pedagogical University in Dushanbe, and Khojand National University- Department of Technology. At the behest of the SCCs themselves, speakers from international organizations and NGOs made presentations at the Slavonic University, the Tajik National University, the Tajik National Pedagogical University (all in Dushanbe) and the Technological University in Khojand. The following topics were addressed: "Tajikistan Seen from the Point of View of the International Community;" "The United Nations and its System of Protection of Human Rights;" "Introduction to Civic Education;" "Advocacy: Advantage, Principles and Company Planning." The speakers represented the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peace Building (UNTOP), IFES, and the Legal and Economic Reform Center. The University of Kurghon Teppa has agreed to host an SCC beginning next year. This is the second year that IFES has conducted the Student Conversation Clubs in universities in Tajikistan. The reaction to the initiative has been overwhelmingly favorable, as students get to practice their skills of oral presentation and debate while learning more about contemporary issues facing Tajikistan and the global community at large. IFES' goal in 2004 will be to expand the clubs to additional educational institutions in both the north and south of the country.

Political Party Development

During the First Quarter of FY 2003/4, IFES continued meeting regularly with representatives of the registered political parties to discuss the political situation, political party development, and preparation for the upcoming parliamentary elections in February 2005. The following is a list of the political parties and their representatives in attendance:

- Communist Party of Tajikistan (Mr. Shabdolov, Chairman and Mr. Karimov, Deputy Chairman)
- Democratic Party of Tajikistan (Mr. Valiev, Head of DPT staff and Mr. Asliddin Sohbnazar, Head of Dushanbe Party Branch)
- Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (Mr. Muhiddin Kabiri, Deputy Chairman)
- Socialist Party (Mr. M. Narziev, Chairman)
- People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (Mr. D. Davlatov, 1st Deputy and Ms. Muhtarama Askarovna, Head Women Department)
- Socialist Democratic Party (Mr. R. Zoirov, Chairman and Mr. Hadyaev Latif, Ms. Hurinisso Gaforzoda).

All the parties expressed their interest to intensify cooperation with IFES during the months leading to the upcoming election.

The abovementioned meetings and other meetings with women NGOs led IFES, with the help of local experts, to prepare two comprehensive concept papers on district-focused trainings for the political process: Communications and skill building training seminars for political activists of local party branches, and Gender-based training seminars for female political activists, community leaders, and employees in the local Hukumats. IFES contracted two locally-based consultants to help create the training modules and to train future trainers. A draft module will be delivered at the beginning of January, with a training session on these modules planned for January 22-27. The module for the district trainings will include the following topics: *Democracy and Political Parties, State Power Structure, Legal Issues Related to Political Party Work, Leadership Skills and Capacity-building, Political Party Work on the Local Level, Preparing for the Election*. These seminars are scheduled to begin by February 2004. The British Embassy expressed interest to contribute to this project and possibly fund additional seminars.

A three day seminar will be held for the gender-based training module. Training will be provided on the following topics: *Democracy and Political Activity, State Power Structure, Legal Issues Related to Key Women's Interests, Leadership Skills and Capacity Building, How to Lobby for Women's cause*. IFES will start the gender-based trainings in February 2004. The Swiss Cooperation Office has indicated interest in funding a minimum of five seminars.

IFES contacted the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) for possible cooperation concerning political party development. Both institutions

are political party foundations linked to German parties. In their response, the Tashkent-based representatives of the two foundations showed great interest in joint projects with regard to the upcoming election. In the meeting with Mr. Heinz Buehler (KAS), it was suggested to jointly conduct a seminar/training for political parties on fund raising techniques, tentatively in April/May 2004. KAS would provide an international expert and cover his/her travel costs as well as those of the event. IFES would be in charge of organizing the event in Dushanbe, liaising with political parties and providing local speakers.

Elections Issues

Opposition parties began preparing for the upcoming election in February 2005. The Social-Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan have initiated a Coalition for Transparent and Fair Elections. Mr. Rahmatullo Zoirov (SDPT) and Rahmatullo Valiev (DP) would like other political parties to join the Coalition.

A Working Group consisting of representatives of political parties, UNTOP, OSCE, and IFES submitted a draft containing approximately 50 amendments on the existing electoral law to the parliament. With nearly all parties in favor of the proposed changes, the Working Group and parliament waited for the signal and remarks of President Rakhmonov. The Parliament informed IFES that the presidential legal advisor, Mr. Shoev, is to review the Working Group paper before the President comments.

In December USAID and IFES met with representatives of three registered political parties (the Social Democratic Party, Islamic Renaissance party and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan) in order to discuss amendments to the electoral law. The party representatives stressed the need for international pressure on the government to foster reform. With the beginning of a political dialogue, IFES is hopeful that the existing electoral law will be amended in order to provide more transparency and is willing to provide assistance to continue discussions. A special Political Discussion Club on this topic has been scheduled for January 28, 2004.

No party has formally filed this paper as a draft law in the Parliament yet. Although involved in the preparation of the draft, albeit in a limited fashion, PDP distanced itself from the Working Group paper. PDP had attended the Political Discussion Club hosted by UNTOP/NAPST in mid-December. A public discussion on electoral law related matters shall take place on 28 January 2004.

IFES submitted a comprehensive concept paper called "Recommendations on Election Assistance to the Tajik Parliamentary Election in February 2005" to the State Department and US Embassy in Dushanbe. The paper suggests activities in the field of assistance to promote electoral legislative reform, voter registration, material assistance, technical assistance regarding organizational improvements, voter education, preparation/printing of a poll worker manual, ethical and procedural elections training, domestic observer training, political party/candidate training, training of political party observers,

preparation of a manual on resolution of electoral disputes. Total costs of the suggested projects are USD 2,400,000.

IFES Country Director Oskar Lehner met with Mr. Mirzoali Boltuyev, Chairman of the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda (CCER), and Mr. Abdumajid Dostiev (Dep. Chairman Majlisi Oli), other government officials, and political party representatives to emphasize the link between international assistance and an improvement in the election process that will comply with the international standards for free and fair elections. Opposition parties indicate that they can expect improvements only if the international community steps up its pressure on Tajik authorities to go ahead with the reform.

IFES HQ elaborated a project proposal on *Ethical and Procedural Elections Training* for the U.S. State Department, which will target top-end election administration employees, politicians, and community member. IFES foresees 10 regional trainings on this matter and 1,200 training seminars for polling station committee members. CCER Chairman Boltuyev wrote a letter to IFES expressing its interest and readiness to cooperate with IFES in this project.

Parliamentary Outreach

Mr. Muhammadato Sultonov, Press Secretary of the Majlisi Oli, provided IFES with a project outline that proposes the conducting of several TV programs designed to educate citizens about the political and legislative process, focusing on the work of parliamentarians in the regions. The project, part of IFES' approved workplan, will include opportunities for interactive citizen participation through question-and-answer sessions. Draft scripts and theme were being reviewed and will be completed late next month.

The Deputy Speaker of the Majlisi Namoyandagon of the RT, Mr. Abdumajid Dostiev, further indicated that the parliamentary press service is interested in creating a parliamentary website, where daily information on activities and sessions of the parliamentary committees and commissions as well as the parliamentary factions' contribution would be displayed. IFES is evaluating the feasibility of supporting this project.

III. MATERIALS PRODUCED

During the reporting period IFES Tajikistan produced the following materials:

- Textbook- Citizenship and Participation in Government, Your Role in Civil Society in the 21st Century, volume one, Tajik Language, 146 pages, ISBN 1-931459-01-0
- Textbook related Teachers Manual, volume one, Tajik language, 267 pages, ISBN 1-931459-02-9

IV. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The Minister of Education (MoE) refused to approve an additional list of 35 schools to be included in the civic education project. However, this refusal stems from a miscommunication within the MoE; a newly appointed official had been unaware of the ongoing cooperation. Mr. Mullochaev, Head of the MOE Department for International Relations, plans to resolve the issue through an appropriate provision in the Memorandum of Understanding. The schools selected by IFES included those in which IFES' Student Action Committees existed or IFES' partner Relief International conducted projects.

IFES experienced a personnel change during this quarter. While Mr. Bradley Austin, IFES/Kazakhstan Chief of Party, coordinated the office as Acting Project Manager during October, the new Country Director, Mr. Oskar Lehner, a specialist in civic education and political parties/elections, took over on November 2, 2003.